





## WHY JOHN WILKES BOOTH ASSAS-

SINATED LINCOLN.

From Potomac's Democrat.

Another of the characters of the war

time was a wild, dashing, bee-brained

young man, named John Wilkes Booth.

From his father he inherited a certain

taint of frenzy under excitement that

was cousin-german to insanity. This

Booth was a reckless, hand-on-fellow,

whose delight was to dress well, feed

upon female hearts, and in mimicry

mouth the utterances of men of crea-

tive genius. His blood was hot, and

passions quick to kindle. In his loves

and friendships he was erratic and po-

pular. He did not try to study him-

self, and grew up wild and tumultuous.

Among the chosen friends of his

boyhood was a dashing, chivalrous

young man named John Y. Beal, whose

home was in the beautiful Shenandoah

Valley, not far from Winchester, as we

know from having been there. Damon

and Pythias were not more attached to

each other than were Booth and Beal.

They rode, walked, dined, drank and

outraged together. Beal was South-

ern in his sympathies, and was to a

certain extent as much a martyr as was

erratic John Brown, who was taken in

a raid, hung in the jail yard at Charles

town, Virginia, by order of Governor

Wise, and whose scaffold as we write

this, is now in our office. Beal plan-

ned raids on Northern cities, and at

last was captured at or near Buffalo,

tried for piracy on Northern lakes, and

sentenced to be hung on Beal's Is-

land, in the harbor of New York. In

prison waiting his doom, we leave him

for a time.

One afternoon, in the city of Wash-

ington, while Beal was under sentence

of death, there alighted from a carriage

two men, who walked into the room

occupied by Washington McLean, of

Cincinnati, who was at that time in

Washington in the interest of his busi-

ness. These men were called were Sen-

ator Hale, from New Hampshire, and

John Wilkes Booth, with whom,

through the Morgans, of Kentucky,

McLean had become quite well ac-

quainted.

Their errand was briefly told. Booth

was anxious to save the life of Beal, his

friend and confidential personal friend.

He had interested Mr. Hale in his be-

half, who, from his former identifica-

tion with the political movement that

had grown into the elevation of Lin-

coln to the Presidency, had come to

ask at the Executive the favor of mer-

cy for a brave enemy, who had, in de-

fense of his friends in the South, done

no more than people in the North ap-

plauded their scouts and adventurers

for doing or attempting.

They implored McLean to go with

them to the President, as a Democrat—

as a friend of Booth—as a man who

had much influence with Mr. Lincoln,

and to vouch with Mr. Hale, for any

promise Booth might make in return

for this great favor to him. After a

protracted interview, McLean accom-

panied Hale and Booth in a carriage to

the residence of John W. Forney, who

was then in bed, the hour being late.

Forney was awakened from his sleep

and told the object of the call. His

sympathies were enlisted, as he was

always ready to serve his friends.

It was an hour or more past mid-

night when Hale, Forney, McLean and

Booth were driven to the White House.

The guard, at the request of Forney,

admitted the carriage to the grounds.

Mr. Lincoln was called from his sleep,

and there, in the dead of night, he sat

and listened to the prayers of Booth

and the intercessions of those who

came with him to ask the favor of Ex-

ecutive clemency.

That interview lasted till 4 o'clock in

the morning. It was one of tears, pe-

tition and prayer. There was not a

dry eye in the room as he knelt at the

feet of Lincoln, clasped his knees with

his hands, and begged him to spare the

life of one man—a personal friend, who

in serving the ones he loved, had come

to the door of death.

Booth told all. He told how, long

before, in a fit of passion to do some

bold deed, he had joined in a conspir-

acy to assassinate the President and

hold him as a hostage for the release of

certain military prisoners who were friends

of Booth, and who, it was thought,

were to be shot. He told of the meet-

ings they had held at the house of Mrs.

Serratt, and that that plan had gone

through long before.

He offered his services at any time,

and in any capacity, free of cost and

fearless of consequences. The eminent

gentleman who were there with him

joined in the request that the prayer of

Booth be granted, and that Beal be

pardoned.

At last, President Lincoln, with the

tears streaming down his face, took

Booth by the hands, bade him rise and

stand like a man, and gave him his

promise that Beal should be pardoned.

He asked the party to depart that he

might gain rest for the work of the

morning, and said that the official docu-

ment they asked for should be forward-

ed at once to United States Marshal

Robert Murray, in New York, then

through him to the officers having the

execution of Beal in charge.

After breakfast, Lincoln informed

Seward what he had done or promised.

That public sentiment in the North de-

manded that Beal should be hung. He

declared that to pardon Beal would dis-

courage enlistments, lengthen the war,

and insult the sentiment that called for

blood. He chided Lincoln for making

such promises without the advice of

his cabinet, or advising with himself;

Seward, on State policy.

As the argument grew contentious,

Seward declared that if the conduct of

the war was to be trifled with by pe-

pals for humanity, he should go out

of the cabinet and use his influence

against the President, and charge him

with being in sympathy with the Con-

federacy.

Lincoln yielded, and Beal was exe-

cuted to the carrying out of the sentence

of the court. The reaction to Lincoln's

nervous system was such that for days

he was far from well.

The effect on Booth was terrible. He

raved like a madman, and in his frenzy

swore that Lincoln and Seward should

both pay for the grief and agony he

had been put to. From the death of

Beal, Booth brooded vengeance for that

which he considered a personal affront.

His rage took in Seward, so he engaged

Harold, Astor and others, to avenge

Beal's death by killing Seward while he

(Booth) wreaked human vengeance on

the President.

At last came the hour. Booth killed

Lincoln. His friends, or the rela-

tives and avengers of Beal, tried their

best to kill Seward, and when they left

him stabbed, bleeding and limp as a rag,

as he rolled over behind the bed where

they found him, they supposed their

work was done.

Our story is told. We have given

the truth of history, and told exactly

why Abraham Lincoln, the humane

president, was killed.

Two Scranton women caught a

young man in the postoffice the other

day, drove him into the corner, and

then and there were two souls and two

horsewhips that beat as one. He

said they were not handsome.

"That's right, dear mother," said a

Washington street daughter, who was

expecting her fellow: "just stir up

that fire, and run out to the shed and

bring up enough wood to last till one

## TELEGRAPHIC.

The Impeachment Case

Belknap Denies the Juris-

diction of the Court.

A POSTPONEMENT UN-

TIL THE 19TH.

A CIRCULAR FROM THE

TREASURY.

Movements of the National

Game (Pedro.)

The Bloomington Elec-

tion.

WASHINGTON, April 17.—The formal

proceedings in the impeachment

trial of ex Secretary Belknap was com-

menced in the Senate to-day, and at-

tracted an immense crowd of spectators.

Officers turned back the incoming tide

of people from the corridors. Within

the chamber the scene was not unlike

the days of the impeachment trial of

Andrew Johnson, though when the

names of the Senators were called to

sit as judges, one missed those of Sum-

ner, Fessenden, Trumbull and others so

conspicuous in the old impeachment

trial. The feature of the day was the

unexpected presence of the defendant,

who entered the Senate chamber arm

in arm with his counsel, ex Senator

Carpenter, and took a seat beside him

at the table of his counsel. Mr. Car-

penter was in full dress, and Belknap

was faultlessly attired. Jerry Black

and Montgomery Blair, the other coun-







